United Nations E/AC.51/2016/L.4/Add.25

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: Limited
24 June 2016

Original: English

Committee for Programme and Coordination
Fifty-sixth session
31 May-24 June 2016
Agenda item 7
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its fifty-sixth session

Draft report

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Addendum

Coordination questions: report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination

(*Item 4 (a)*)

Annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2015

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 31 May 2016, the Committee considered the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) for 2015 (E/2016/56).

2. The Acting Secretary of CEB and Director of the secretariat of CEB introduced the report and responded to questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. Delegations welcomed the report, expressing appreciation for its quality, precision and thoroughness. Several delegations noted the important contribution of CEB in coordinating the work of the United Nations system, including in implementing administrative and management initiatives. The Board's role was seen as vital to avoiding duplication and to strengthening programme effectiveness. More detail on the Board's efforts to publicize its work and enhance transparency was sought.

4. There was strong agreement on the need to ensure that the work of CEB continued to be aligned with Member State priorities and guided by

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intergovernmental mandates. In that context, concern was expressed that CEB was undertaking initiatives for which no intergovernmental mandate existed, and it was stressed that any initiative must be presented to the relevant governing bodies of the United Nations system before being implemented (for example, in the area of procurement). It was stressed that each organization had its own rules and procedures which needed to be adhered to. Another delegation expressed its confidence that CEB was operating within the framework of mandates provided by Member States. In particular, it was recognized that CEB had both the mandate and the responsibility to show initiative and creativity in looking for ways to maximize coherence and efficiency, and the flexible approach through which CEB had carried out its work to date was welcomed. In addition, it was noted that the capacity to take initiative was crucial, and CEB was encouraged to be proactive in improving the efficiency and coordination of the United Nations system.

5. The Board's important role in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was highlighted, in particular to ensure the maximum efficiency and coherence of the system, to avoid overlap and to make sure that each entity contributed effectively within its own mandate to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. Referring to information provided in the report that CEB, in 2015, had taken steps towards supporting Member States in the transition to and implementation of the 2030 Agenda and enhancing policy coherence in the United Nations system, it was highlighted that implementation had not yet begun in 2015 and that CEB seemed to have taken decisions on matters not yet discussed by Member States. The view was expressed that CEB should take an active, leading role in strengthening system-wide coherence and integrated programmatic coordination in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and should avoid a piecemeal approach. Noting the lessons that had been learned from the CEB review of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals at the country level, a delegation expressed its expectation that a flexible and integrated approach to supporting the 2030 Agenda that capitalized on the diversity and specialized strengths of individual organizations of the United Nations system would be pursued.

6. As the annual overview report covered only activities in 2015, the Acting Secretary was requested to provide an update on CEB activities carried out so far in 2016 towards ensuring coherence of the United Nations system in support of the Sustainable Development Goals. Welcoming the commitment of CEB to respecting national ownership of the 2030 Agenda, a delegation enquired about the form of support that the United Nations system was providing to countries that requested assistance in integrating the Sustainable Development Goals in national policies.

7. Questions were raised about the focus of the work of the High-level Committee on Programmes in 2015 with regard to supporting Member States in the transition to and implementation of an integrated and transformative sustainable development agenda, namely on inequality, human rights, preventing conflict and promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies. In that context, it was emphasized that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development took a broader approach and that all Goals needed to be considered by CEB as part of the integrated, indivisible and balanced Agenda. Several delegations stressed the need for a balanced approach and stressed that CEB needed to implement the will of Member States as provided in the mandate. Reassurances were sought that the Board was making efforts to support the implementation the 2030 Agenda in full. Highlighting the mandate in the 2030 Agenda

recognizing that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, was the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, a delegation observed that the annual overview report did not give the impression that poverty reduction had been addressed by CEB in robust terms. Another delegation expressly stated that it had no difficulty with the issues addressed by the High-level Committee on Programmes.

8. One delegation stated that it took note with interest of paragraph 26 of the report, in which it was stated that the Board had held a discussion on lessons learned from the initiative to accelerate the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals that could be applied in the context of supporting implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and particularly that the Board agreed, in pursuing the Sustainable Development Goals, on the necessity to take a similarly flexible and integrated approach that capitalized on the diversity and specialized strengths of individual organizations of the United Nations system. That delegation stressed that it expected CEB to take an active role in leading in an integrated approach towards the implementation of a cross-programme and cross-entity agenda, including the 2030 Agenda, by identifying where the activities and related capacities had already been built into the Organization, particularly those that had been devoted to support for the Millennium Development Goals, and by building on them, while avoiding a piecemeal approach or requesting resources in bulk without examining the existing capacities.

9. A number of comments and questions were raised in relation to United Nations conferences and summits. Specifically, questions were raised about the role of CEB in the preparation of and follow-up to the third International Conference on Financing for Development, which was seen as an important policy framework to finance the Sustainable Development Goals. Disappointment was expressed at the lack of analysis and information provided on the matter in the report compared with other intergovernmental processes, such as the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the 2030 Agenda. Appreciation was expressed for the fact that indigenous peoples' issues were visible in the Board's work through the support of CEB for the system-wide action plan to ensure a coherent approach to achieving the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Board was also thanked for the important work done at the twenty-first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and its contribution to the successful outcome of the United Nations Climate Change Conference. Clarification was sought as to whether there had been any activities undertaken by CEB in 2015 to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

10. Several delegations expressed their support for the work of the High-level Committee on Management in identifying opportunities for efficiencies and eliminating duplication across the United Nations system through greater collaboration on management issues. The view was expressed that CEB was uniquely well placed to promote and work through administrative and management reform ideas that could be replicated throughout the system. A delegation welcomed how that had been done to date and encouraged further reporting on such initiatives in the future. The positive contribution that CEB made through the Human Resources Network of the High-level Committee on Management towards coordinating United Nations system input to the comprehensive review by the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) of the

United Nations common system compensation package for staff in the Professional and higher categories was noted.

11. Comments were expressed regarding the activities related to system-wide procurement. Some delegations welcomed the initiatives that had been pursued under the auspices of CEB and expressed satisfaction at seeing the number of vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition increase. At the same time, enquiry was made about the mandate for various activities in that area, including the long-term agreements and enhanced collaboration in the area of procurement, and it was stressed that procurement initiatives should fully respect the rules and procedures of each entity and needed to be reviewed and considered by Member States. Clarification was sought as to whether the number of registered vendors from developing countries and countries in transition was the only indicator of an increase in procurement activity. Information was also sought on the overall percentage of vendors from developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the total volume of procurement in the United Nations system. Statistics on that, as well as elaboration on the nature of goods and services that they provided, were requested. There was also an enquiry as to whether procurement documents were published in French to afford vendors from francophone countries the same ability to access procurement opportunities.

12. With respect to other activities carried out by the High-level Committee on Management, more information on common banking agreements was requested, including the source of the mandate to conclude such agreements and details on their substance.

13. A delegation also queried whether the United Nations system data catalogue was available in multiple languages. Expanding on the point, questions were raised concerning what activities were being carried out under the auspices of CEB to promote multilingualism across the United Nations system and whether there were active focal points within the organizations. It was noted that the issue was particularly pertinent to recruitment, and in that context it was recalled that some ICSC members had encouraged organizations to recognize language proficiency through performance evaluation systems.

14. A number of questions were raised about the activities of the United Nations Development Group. Citing the compilation of good practices on South-South and triangular cooperation as an important and interesting initiative, a delegation queried when it would become available and whether it would be shared with United Nations resident coordinators, as well as with national Governments. An update on the Joint Operations Facility in Brazil, including any benefits that it had delivered, was sought. More detail was also requested on the partnership between the United Nations and the World Bank in fragile and conflict-affected countries, including the source of the mandate.

Conclusions and recommendations

15. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly take note of the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2015 (E/2016/56).**